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PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE: WHAT'S NEXT FOR NATO?
LONGER ESSAY

COL TIMOTHY W. HAYES/CLASS OF 94
CORE COURSE IV and CORE COURSE V
DR ROY W STAFFORD, JR
COL JAMES B SMITH

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While the Partnership [for Peace] is not NATO membership, neither is it a permanent holding room. It changes the entire NATO dialogue so that now the question is no longer whether NATO will take on new members, but when and how.

*President Clinton
Prague, Czech Republic
January 12, 1994*

Introduction

The Partnership for Peace (PFP) is a significant step forward in solving a dilemma that NATO has been struggling with since the end of the Cold War. That dilemma has been whether to expand or not. It appears the Alliance has accepted, in principle, that PFP will lead to NATO expansion. However, it is still vague exactly how and when the expansion will take place. Even more unclear is who will get it in and, probably more important, who will be left out.

This essay looks at the future of NATO, now that it has endorsed PFP, and discusses how it must adjust to the changing conditions throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. After a brief look at NATO's changes since the end of the Cold War, it analyzes the Partnership for Peace (PFP) proposal and its implications for the future of NATO and US involvement in NATO. It provides suggestions for how the Alliance should implement PFP and proposes follow-on steps the US should take to ensure PFP leads to an orderly and meaningful expansion of NATO. Finally, it discusses how extending NATO membership to Eastern Europe could affect US military strategy.

NATO After The Cold War

Beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989, the Cold War came to a rapid conclusion. By the end of 1991, Germany was reunited and still a member of NATO, the Warsaw Pact had disappeared, and the Soviet Union had broken apart. The threat that NATO had been formed to oppose no longer existed. As the US struggled through an economic

recession, it looked increasingly inward, and Americans sought a "Peace Dividend" from the diminished expenditures of the Cold War. Many on both sides of the Atlantic questioned whether there was any purpose left for NATO.

At the same time, ethnic conflicts throughout Eastern Europe and states of the former Soviet Union began to surface, revealing a new and perhaps more insidious threat to peace and stability in Europe. Particularly disturbing was the war in the former Yugoslavia, both because of its proximity to Western Europe and because of its potential to spill over into neighboring countries. The brutality of ethnic cleansing was particularly shocking to a continent that had just witnessed the collapse of totalitarian regimes with virtually no bloodshed.

NATO members realized the Alliance had to change if it was to remain relevant in this altered political and security landscape. At the Rome Summit in November 1991, NATO adopted a new strategic concept that, when fully implemented, would substantially reduce its military forces while increasing their flexibility and mobility. Acknowledging the need to be able to react to varying contingencies, the new strategy called for a streamlined military command structure that would allow the Alliance to adapt its defense planning to the vastly modified European security situation. At the Rome Summit, NATO also approved the Declaration of Peace and Cooperation. This declaration highlighted the Alliance's support for reform in Eastern Europe. It also established the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which became a forum for the former Warsaw Pact countries, including the former Soviet republics, to discuss security issues with NATO members.¹

Despite these steps to adjust to the post-Cold War security environment, two years later NATO was still struggling to define its precise role. It had been unable to deal effectively with the worsening strife in the former Yugoslavia. While the NACC provided a useful forum for discussion, the fledgling East European democracies saw no tangible benefits and continued to seek security guarantees as they faced disruptive forces in establishing new forms of government.

¹NATO Handbook, (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 1992) 15-17.

Russia was no longer a threat to NATO, but the East Europeans, who had been dominated by the USSR, were still leery of the Russian bear. That threat suddenly loomed even larger when nationalists unexpectedly won a plurality of the Russian Parliament election in December of 1993.

Opponents of NATO were proclaiming the Alliance dead, saying it had been unable to adjust to the new European security environment and that the US was no longer needed to help provide security to Europe. Meanwhile, some of NATO's proponents complained about the slow pace of change and the Alliance's failure to embrace the new democracies of Eastern Europe by offering them NATO membership.

It was in the this context that the US proposal for PFP began to take shape. At the North Atlantic Council meeting in Athens in June 1993, Secretary of State Warren Christopher called for an expanded NACC agenda that would include joint activities on peacekeeping, joint exercises, and training in civil-military relations.² However, it soon became evident that something more than a broader NACC program was needed. Germany's Defense Minister Ruhe spoke out publicly to propose that NATO embrace the Visegrad countries -- Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia -- by offering them immediate NATO membership.³ The Visegrad states also began to forcefully express their desire to join NATO.⁴ Additionally, the US was seeking ways to address Ukraine's security concerns as discussions on Ukraine's nuclear weapons moved forward slowly in fits and starts.⁵ To meet all these needs and, at the same time, not arouse the Russians, the US developed PFP. It was unveiled by Secretary of Defense Les Aspin at the NATO Defense Minister's meeting in October 1993 in preparation for the January 1994 NATO Summit.

²Warren Christopher, U.S. Department of State Press Release, 10 Jun. 1993.

³Alfred A. Reisch, "Central and Eastern Europe's Quest for NATO Membership," RFE/RL Research Report 9 Jul. 1993: 44-45.

⁴"Who Gets In The Club?," The Washington Post, 24 Oct. 1993 (LEGI-SLATE Article 190854).

⁵"Ukraine: Nuclear Fever," The Washington Post, 28 Oct. 1993 (LEGI-SLATE Article 191138).

Partnership for Peace -- Good or Bad?

Partnership for Peace. The PFP Framework Document along with the PFP Invitation describe the PFP. The purpose of PFP is to express "a joint conviction that stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area can be achieved only through cooperation and common action. Protection and promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and safeguarding of freedom, justice, and peace through democracy are shared values fundamental to the Partnership."⁶

The Framework Document calls for states subscribing to the PFP to "recall they are committed to the preservation of democratic societies, their freedom from coercion and intimidation, and the maintenance of the principles of international law." It also calls on partners to reaffirm their commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights with specific references that partners will refrain from the use of force against other states, respect existing borders, and settle disputes by peaceful means. The Framework Document further requires that partners declare their conviction to their responsibilities under the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), especially as those obligations apply to disarmament and arms control.⁷

The Framework Document lists the following five objectives for PFP:

- a) facilitation of transparency in national defence planning and budgeting processes;
- b) ensuring democratic control of defence forces;
- c) maintenance of the capability and readiness to contribute, subject to constitutional considerations, to operations under the authority of the UN and/or the responsibility of the CSCE;
- d) the development of cooperative military relations with NATO, for the purpose of joint planning, training, and exercises in order to strengthen their ability to undertake missions in the fields of peacekeeping, search and

⁶"Partnership for Peace: Framework Document," NATO Press Service, 10 Jan. 1994.

⁷Framework Document.

rescue, humanitarian operations, and others as may subsequently be agreed;

- e) the development, over the longer term, of forces that are better able to operate with those of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance.⁸

The Framework Document further stipulates some broad understandings regarding PFP. Individual PFP programs will be developed for each partner based on documents provided by the partner and activities suggested by NATO. Each partner may establish a liaison office at NATO Headquarters in Brussels to participate in NACC and Partnership meetings and at the Partnership Coordination Cell in Mons to conduct military planning. Partners will fund their participation in PFP activities and will attempt to share the costs of exercises in which they participate. Additionally, partners will exchange information with NATO as may be needed to achieve interoperability in planning and military exercises and to display transparency in defense planning and budgeting. Partners who undertake peacekeeping, search and rescue, and humanitarian missions will take part in related NATO exercises. The last statement of the Framework Document stipulates that NATO will consult with any partner who "perceives a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence, or security"⁹ -- a commitment that parallels Article 4 of the Washington Treaty, but falls short of the definitive security guarantees offered by Article 5 of the treaty.

The PFP Invitation is significant because it comments on NATO expansion. It states that "NATO remains open to the membership of the other European states in a position to further the principles of the [Washington] Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area." It also says that NATO would welcome expansion to the East as part of an evolutionary process.¹⁰

⁸Framework Document.

⁹Framework Document.

¹⁰"Partnership for Peace: Invitation," NATO Press Service, 10 Jan. 1994.

As might be expected, the PFP proposal generated a significant amount of commentary in the US, both for and against the proposal. The following two sections describe the major advantages and disadvantages of the PFP as they were debated in the US.

Advantages. National Security Advisor Anthony Lake says PFP is an "evolutionary process of expanding NATO membership, providing the political reassurance and the pathway to full integration that many states in Europe's east now seek." He identifies four reasons why PFP is the proper approach for NATO to deal with security issues to its east. First, it is a dynamic process, allowing NATO to expand as states demonstrate their commitments to the principles of the Alliance. Second, PFP is inclusive and does not draw new dividing lines in Europe. A policy that merely re-established the Iron Curtain east by several hundred miles could undermine emerging democracies that would be excluded in such a move. PFP provides equal opportunities to all East European countries as well as the states of the former Soviet Union. Third, even though PFP starts a process that could lead to NATO expansion, it does not disrupt NATO's current political and military structures nor does it interfere with the Alliance's major role of collective defense for its members. Fourth, PFP creates a vehicle for Eastern Europe and the states of the former Soviet Union to address threats to their stability but, what is more important, it aids in preventing instability by encouraging further reform in the region. Military cooperation with NATO, a commitment to civilian control of defense establishments and transparency in defense budgets are three areas that will increase stability in the PFP partner states.¹¹

Secretary of State Warren Christopher argues convincingly that PFP is a practical approach that will allow the partners to develop a solid working relationship with NATO members as they exercise, train, and plan together. He notes each partner can determine its level of involvement, thereby deciding its own fate regarding the potential for future NATO membership. He adds that PFP will also be a useful tool for NATO, helping the Alliance adjust to new capabilities such as peacekeeping and humanitarian relief.¹²

¹¹Anthony Lake, "How Partnership for Peace will build security in Europe," The Boston Globe, 12 Jan. 1994.

¹²Warren Christopher, "NATO Plus," The Washington Post, 9 Jan. 1994, C7.

Disadvantages. As European security experts, former US government officials, and political commentators expressed their dislike for PFP, the disadvantages tended to fall into four general categories. First, the effect PFP will have on NATO and its future role. Second, the appearance that PFP abandons the states of Eastern Europe, in particular those that fear a resurgent Russia. Third, the perception that PFP was designed to alleviate Russian concerns over an increased NATO influence in Eastern Europe. Last, the effect PFP will have on the US and its continued involvement in European security issues.

Regarding PFP and NATO's future role, former Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, wrote that PFP will plunge NATO into "vague multilateralism." He said that the PFP concept is unclear and that it offers NATO partnership to a much broader area than is necessary. Historically, NATO has been a cohesive alliance that had rejected multilateralism, and it should continue to do so. At this time of redefining its mission, rather than expand contacts to nations ranging from Western Europe to Central Asia, NATO should concentrate on the core nations of Europe, and work to include as many of the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe as possible.¹³

Second, PFP fails to provide security guarantees to Eastern Europe, leaving a security vacuum between Germany and Russia, and it does not address the Visegrad states desires for integration with Western Europe. Insecurity in this region has led to several wars in the past. Because of this, many felt that PFP did not go far enough in offering a genuine security guarantee to those nations who need and want it the most, the Visegrad countries. James Baker, former Secretary of State, stated that more effort should have been made in preserving and consolidating democratic gains in Eastern Europe.¹⁴ Baker's successor, Lawrence Eagleburger, was more specific, calling for a commitment by NATO to admit Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (though not Slovakia), and to start that process immediately.¹⁵ Referring to the 1945

¹³Henry Kissinger, "Not This Partnership," The Washington Post, 24 Nov. 1993 (LEGI-SLATE Article 193018).

¹⁴James A. Baker, interview, Today, National Broadcasting Corporation, 7 Jan. 1994 (Transcript ID: 1030429).

¹⁵Lawrence Eagleburger, interview, Late Edition, Cable News Network, 16 Jan. 1994 (Transcript ID: 1031122).

Yalta Conference, many East Europeans point out they were abandoned by the West then and feel that PFP, with its ambiguous conditions for consultations if threatened, leaves them out in the cold again.¹⁶ Kissinger also notes that by offering the PFP on an equal basis to Russia and the Visegrad states, it equates the victims of the Cold War with the victimizer.¹⁷

Additionally, PFP fails to recognize how important NATO membership is to the Visegrad states. These countries view NATO not only as a security organization, but as the foundation that will provide for their total integration into Western Europe. They are keenly aware of Germany's reconstruction after World War II and its acceptance into Europe's economic, political, and social structures. They credit NATO with making this possible. In their opinion, membership in NATO is the necessary first step toward their integration into Western Europe and the only way to complete their transformation to stable democracies with market economies.¹⁸

Perhaps the most dissatisfaction was caused by the perception that PFP compromised security assurances to Eastern Europe in order to allay Russian anxieties. Former Secretary of Defense, Richard Cheney, said that by offering an ambiguous security guarantee to the Visegrad countries in deference to Russia, we "are letting the worst elements of Russia dictate our relationship between the United States and those new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe."¹⁹ Others cite US worries over Russian sensitivities as giving Russia a de facto veto over NATO expansion. If Russian clamor over NATO expansion inhibits the US now, what would NATO and the US do if a resurgent, nationalistic Russia opposed NATO expansion?²⁰ The success of nationalist parties in the December 1993 Russian elections increased the claims that PFP was leaning too much toward Russia and ignoring the legitimate security concerns of Eastern Europe. A softening of PFP in favor of the Russians only rewards further Russian

¹⁶John Pomfret, "Walesa Warns Communism May Return," The Washington Post, 4 Jan. 1994, A1.

¹⁷Kissinger.

¹⁸Michael Mandelbaum, "Open the Ranks To Eastern Europe," The Washington Post, 6 Sep. 1993 (LEGI-SLATE Article 187563).

¹⁹Richard Cheney, interview, John McLaughlin's One on One, 14 Jan. 1994 (Transcript ID: 1031043).

²⁰Josef Joffe, "Putting Russian First," US News & World Report, 17 Jan. 1994, 52.

nationalism. The Russian people need to understand that the actions of their country can result in penalties as well as rewards. A Washington Post editorial stated "[I]t would be a mistake to subordinate the extension of democracy to an overly solicitous reading of the Moscow scene."²¹

Other opponents of PFP claim it is a hollow and excessively cautious policy designed to buy time and delay decisions about European security and NATO expansion. Through this stalling action, the US has indicated its willingness and desire to become less involved in European security issues. At a time when the US should be exerting leadership on defining new roles for NATO, it, instead, offers a plan that does just the opposite.²² European critics go even further surmising that PFP is really a disguise for eventual US withdrawal from Europe and NATO.²³ A vague PFP proposal combined with a lack of US resolve to stop the fighting in the former Yugoslavia both contribute to the perception that the US no longer wants to play a dominant role in Europe.

The Bottom Line. Clearly, many compromises were made as PFP evolved. The result is a program that provides something for everyone, but leaves several difficult issues unresolved. PFP offers a sense of security to the Visegrad states without providing the definitive security guarantees they sought. Countries in Southeastern Europe (Albania, Bulgaria, Romania) were thrilled with PFP because they were included on the same basis as the Visegrad nations. Russian fears of containment by NATO were allayed since they too were offered PFP. Moreover, NATO did not have to deal with the tough question of expansion, but could delay that decision until a future date.

Two aspects of PFP should cause concern. First, in its current form, PFP only provides broad guidelines, and could, as Kissinger stresses, lead to "abstract multilateralism."²⁴ NATO needs to be careful not to become overloaded with a host of PFP partners to the detriment of

²¹"Expanding the Alliance," editorial, The Washington Post, 5 Jan. 1994, A18.

²²Daniel Williams, "Clinton Policy Reflects Effort to Avoid Extending NATO Security Guarantees," The Washington Post, 9 Jan. 1994, A31.

²³Ian Davidson, "Alive but ailing," London Financial Times, 12 Jan. 1994.

²⁴Henry Kissinger, "Be Realistic About Russia," The Washington Post, 25 Jan. 1994, A19.

those East European countries who have progressed the furthest toward meeting the requirements for NATO membership. It is unrealistic to expect any of the republics of Central Asia to be ready for NATO membership soon, but PFP's expansive nature opens the possibility of NATO accession to them. If all nations eligible for PFP eventually joined NATO, the inevitable result would be an organization that looks much like the CSCE. Admittedly, during the Cold War, the CSCE served a valuable purpose in providing a forum for dialogue between East and West. However, in the post-Cold War era, it has fallen far short of expectations for providing tangible security benefits.

A second area of caution is PFP's attempt to please everyone, especially Russia. Not wanting to appear as if it were encircling Russia, PFP generously includes Russia and all the states of the former Soviet Union. Not only does this lead to the excessive multilateralism described above, it avoids the toughest issue -- the future relationship between NATO and Russia. Many doubt that Russia will ever want to join NATO. As Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Frank Wisner, recently testified before the Senate:

I would be astonished if Russia ever took the next step and considered NATO membership. . . . While they want to be part of a stable, secure Europe by their own self-proclaimed statements, ones we need to take seriously, I would really not suspect that they are going to seek NATO membership.²⁵

While a remote possibility, Russian membership in NATO would radically alter the Alliance. Senator Sam Nunn notes that "[T]he day when NATO takes in Russia as a member will be the day when NATO is no longer needed as a threat-based security alliance."²⁶ Russia may enroll in PFP, but NATO should not use this as the primary method for dealing with Russian issues. Because of its size, geostrategic location, large nuclear arsenal, conventional military power, and political influence, Russia is fundamentally different from all the other states in Europe. NATO should interface with Russia in a much broader context than just PFP. As a

²⁵Frank Wisner, testimony, Joint Hearing of The Coalition Defense and Reinforcing Forces Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the European Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Federal News Service Transcript, 1 Feb. 1994, 53.

²⁶Sam Nunn, "NATO and the Successors of the Soviet Empire," The Washington Post, 26 Dec. 1993, C7.

former superpower, Russia can, and will, exert significant influence in many parts of Europe. Its efforts to pressure the Serbs to withdraw from their siege of Sarajevo is one example. NATO should develop a specific relationship of cooperation with Russia providing for on-going dialogue on a host of issues. Continued discussions will allow the Alliance and Russia to confer in areas where their interests coincide, but also provide for the two entities to air differences as well. This is not an endorsement for giving Russia "special" rights in NATO or allowing Russia veto power over NATO decisions. Instead, it is a recognition of reality and the need for NATO to consider Russian concerns, or face the consequences of an increasingly isolated Russia.

On a more optimistic note, PFP has also led to renewed interest in Eastern Europe and the challenges NATO faces in that region. The US has taken a crucial step in leading the way by declaring that East European security is important to the US national security. In a major foreign policy speech, Vice-President Gore stressed that "[T]he security of the states that lie between Western Europe and Russia affects the security of America."²⁷ Statements such as these should allow NATO to focus its PFP efforts on Eastern Europe. Clearly, the emerging democracies in this region show the most progress toward NATO membership, and it is vital that NATO do all it can to anchor these nations firmly with those in Western Europe.

Another bright spot for PFP has been the enthusiastic response to the proposal from countries in Southeastern Europe, such as Romania and Bulgaria. These nations have not made as much headway as the Visegrad states toward democracy, but PFP can provide a strong impetus to them for further gains. Their avid desire to become PFP partners illustrates how important an association with NATO is to all countries of this region. Since none of them want to be left out, PFP motivates them to continue on the difficult path to becoming democratic nations fully integrated with the rest of Europe.

In sum, while PFP caused quite a stir among US European security experts, it has evolved to form a solid foundation from which NATO can proceed to define its role in a post-

²⁷Albert Gore, speech, Pabst Theater, Milwaukee, 6 Jan. 1994.

Cold War Europe. One only has to look at how far PFP advanced in a relatively short time to understand its usefulness. At the June 1993 North Atlantic Council Ministerial meeting in Athens, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said that NATO expansion was "not now on the agenda."²⁸ Yet, by October of 1993, Christopher emphasized the "strong position of the United States" that expansion of NATO "needs to be on the agenda."²⁹ And, by January 1994 the NATO heads of state adopted PFP as the evolutionary process by which NATO could expand. PFP is a significant step forward for NATO as it deals with its future roles, however, at this time, it exists only as a modest framework and needs to be more completely defined. In order for PFP to develop into a solid program, its implementation will have to be closely managed.

PFP Implementation -- The Next Step

PFP implementation is the next step for NATO and a critical one -- not only for the success of PFP, but also for the Alliance's future. PFP is extremely flexible, allowing each partner to decide at what pace and to what depth it wants to participate. But, that flexibility can also generate ambiguities and misunderstandings. Additionally, PFP, as proposed at the January 1994 NATO Summit, lacks detail. PFP must be implemented with clarity so that any confusion and misinterpretation are eliminated. This section discusses the steps necessary for NATO to accomplish PFP implementation effectively.

Criteria For NATO Expansion. *NATO should include clear expansion criteria as part of the individual partnership program to be established for each partner.* Whatever its true genesis, PFP has developed into the method for NATO expansion. The PFP invitation from the NATO Summit states that "[a]ctive participation in the Partnership for Peace will play an important role in the evolutionary process of the expansion of NATO."³⁰ President Clinton's statement to the Visegrad leaders in Prague went even further, saying that NATO expansion was

²⁸Warren Christopher, U.S. Department of State Press Release, 10 Jun. 1993.

²⁹Thomas W. Lippman, "Christopher Discusses 'Partnership' With East, Visit to Ex-Bloc States Opens in Hungary," *The Washington Post*, 22 Oct. 1993 (LEGI-SLATE Article 190710).

³⁰"Partnership for Peace: Invitation," *NATO Press Service*, 10 Jan. 1994.

no longer the question, but when and how.³¹ It only makes sense that if PFP is the means for future NATO membership, then partners should be provided with the criteria necessary for joining the Alliance.

What are these criteria? The NATO charter, The North Atlantic Treaty, addresses expansion, but only in the broadest of terms. Article 10 states that "[t]he Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty."³²

Partners must have a thorough and more definitive explanation of what it will take to become eligible for NATO membership. All of them are going through radical political and economic transformations, the outcome of which cannot be predicted with any degree of confidence. The newly elected leaders of these countries are struggling to complete their movement to democracy. It is an endeavor against competing interests and one that calls for sacrifice from their citizens. They must be able to demonstrate to their nations the importance of democracy and the rewards it can bring. They must be able to point to NATO membership and the accompanying security as a goal worthy of sacrifice. They cannot effectively do this without clear criteria for NATO membership.

Three steps are needed to completely define expansion criteria. First, each partner should know what it must do to meet the PFP objectives as described in the Framework Document. What does ensuring democratic control of defense forces mean? How does a nation facilitate transparency in national defense planning and budgeting? Second, NATO must define measures for evaluating a partner's progress toward achieving the PFP goals along with a definitive statement on how NATO will judge a partner's attainment of the goals. Third, NATO must make clear to each partner whether fulfilling the partnership objectives is enough to be considered for NATO membership or if there will be additional requirements.

³¹William J. Clinton, press conference, US Ambassador's Residence, Prague, 12 Jan. 1994.

³²NATO Handbook, 145.

Critics of such an approach would argue that defining criteria could lead to demands for automatic accession into NATO for any country that meets the standards. Supposedly a country could create enough political pressure, by claiming it had met the membership criteria, to induce NATO to accept a country against its will. That is why it is vital for NATO not only to define membership criteria, but also to declare how it will judge a country's attainment of those criteria. In this manner, NATO decides not only *what* the criteria are, but also *how* a country is deemed to have met them. Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine a situation where a country has met membership criteria, yet NATO would choose to deny it entry into the Alliance.

Timelines for NATO Expansion. *A timeline for potential entry into NATO should be part of the individual work program established for each partner.* Much as the partners need firm criteria for joining NATO, they also require a realistic estimate of when they could become eligible for NATO membership. This schedule would be based upon the partner's commitment to PFP, as described in each partner's application for PFP, as well as its progress toward meeting PFP's objectives.

As NATO develops each partner's PFP work program, it should estimate the amount of time needed for a partner to accomplish PFP's goals. If necessary, NATO may have to conduct an in-country evaluation to ascertain where a partner stands on PFP's objectives. However it gathers the information, NATO should tell each partner when it thinks it could be ready for membership in the Alliance.

There are pitfalls in providing schedules for potential expansion and, thus, NATO must formulate them with caution. First, it must be clear to the partners that the timelines are only estimates and can be changed -- as they most probably will. Second, partners must understand that the passage of time alone does not guarantee NATO membership. Partners will only be considered for membership once NATO has judged that membership criteria have been met.

Despite the pitfalls, there are several benefits, which outweigh any disadvantages, to providing an estimated timeline for NATO membership. First, as with defined criteria, it gives

the leaders of the emerging democracies a tangible goal -- something they can point to when their democratic reforms are questioned by domestic critics.

Second, a realistic schedule provided by NATO may encourage some partners to increase their commitment to PFP. If the estimated time for their accession to NATO is too far in the future, partners may decide it is in their interest to accelerate reforms. Any motivation that NATO can provide to precipitate democratic reforms should be welcomed.

Third, a schedule for expansion demonstrates NATO commitment to PFP and the expansion process that will follow it. The leaders of the Visegrad states were initially disappointed with PFP, concerned that it did not go far enough in providing them with security guarantees. They begrudgingly accepted PFP, but only after being persuaded by the US, and being assured that PFP would lead to NATO membership.³³ Establishing estimated timelines for planned expansion would increase the Alliance's commitment to expansion and formalize its assurances to the Visegrad states. It can only be a matter of time before the Visegrad countries start to push for entry based upon their performance in PFP. NATO may as well plan for an orderly expansion rather than wait for a crisis to force the action.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, NATO will be establishing an expansion timetable for itself. Not only must the partners prepare for expansion, but so must the Alliance. As in any other bureaucratic organization, NATO will be unable to effect change of the magnitude that expansion entails without fixing a firm deadline for the action.

Developing an expansion schedule will allow sufficient time for the necessary discussions and extensive debate on the Alliance's expansion. NATO will have to decide to extend comprehensive security guarantees to potential new members, which will involve establishing the political will in each NATO country for extending the reaches of the Alliance. Moreover, expanding NATO will involve reconsidering the Alliance's overall military strategy. Such questions as increased force structure and additional infrastructure construction as well as their

³³David B. Ottaway, "U.S. 'Partnership' Approach Attracts Four E. Europe States," The Washington Post, 11 Jan. 1994, A14.

respective funding requirements will have to be addressed. Solutions to these problems will be even more difficult because of the large drawdown of forces all NATO members have been experiencing. The Maastricht example -- where national leaders conceived and proposed a plan that was too progressive for their publics -- illustrates why it is so important for NATO to create a realistic plan for expansion and to permit ample time for a debate on the merits of expansion.

US Role in PFP Implementation

In order for NATO to successfully implement PFP, strong and dynamic US leadership is crucial. US direction has been fundamental to any major change in NATO and PFP is no different. The end of the Cold War and the drawdown of US troop strength in Europe has caused Europeans to perceive a diminishing US commitment to the Alliance. However, the US national interests are served by a continued active role in NATO. PFP and the subsequent Alliance expansion will be particularly challenging tasks -- tasks that can only be accomplished by a US prepared to lead the Alliance during this critical period.

*To demonstrate leadership and the depth of its commitment to NATO and PFP, the US should designate a single high-level coordinator for PFP within the US government. The appointment of a single coordinator will focus the US PFP implementation effort, and will strengthen US assurances to East European countries that the US is committed to security in the region. In addition, it will also show continued US resolve in leading the Alliance. The importance of a determined US effort to implement PFP should not be underestimated. As Senator Richard Lugar has said, "I'm concerned [that] without a sustained high-profile effort by this administration to breathe life into partnership for peace, this alliance could fail."*³⁴

The PFP coordinator would be responsible for coordinating and executing all aspects of PFP within the US government. The coordinator's work would fall into two general categories:

³⁴Richard Lugar, Joint Hearing of The Coalition Defense and Reinforcing Forces Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the European Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Federal News Service Transcript, 1 Feb. 1994, 9.

1) the on-going effort to implement PFP within NATO; and 2) the development and execution of a program to educate the Congress and US public on PFP and its potential for NATO expansion.

Regarding NATO's PFP implementation, the coordinator's major task will be to insure that PFP retains a high priority in NATO. With the exception of crises such as the one in the former Yugoslavia, no other program should have a higher priority on NATO's agenda. The coordinator would lead the US effort for working with the Alliance to establish the criteria and timelines for NATO expansion. The coordinator would not supplant the current US structure for working with NATO, but rather, would complement it by placing increased emphasis on PFP and NATO expansion. Because of seniority, the coordinator would have immediate access to the Secretary of State and the President to ensure continued involvement and prominence for PFP at the highest level of the US government. The coordinator will be the person who provides the guidance and direction for US leadership in NATO as the Alliance moves into uncharted territory.

Equally important, the coordinator will play a vital role in US domestic politics. As PFP ultimately leads to NATO expansion, the PFP coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the Congress and the US public comprehend the consequences of NATO expansion. Leading NATO to establish a new European security environment without domestic support for such an endeavor would seriously undermine US credibility.

There needs to be an extensive debate in the US on the merits of extending security guarantees to new NATO members and continued US involvement in NATO. The amount of discussion of PFP leading up to the January 1994 NATO Summit was only a precursor to the long and involved debate that will be necessary for the US to commit to NATO expansion. Already some senators are questioning the public's resolve in maintaining US military forces in Europe.³⁵

³⁵Joe Biden, Joint Hearing of The Coalition Defense and Reinforcing Forces Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the European Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Federal News Service Transcript, 1 Feb. 1994, 32.

To insure Congressional and public awareness on PFP, the coordinator must develop a comprehensive program to educate the US domestic audience on the importance of the issue. The American public must understand that while the Cold War may be over and Eastern Europe may have gained freedom, the struggle for democracy has just begun. US leadership and commitment are essential for the region to transition to stable market economies with democratic governments. The PFP coordinator's program must convince the Congress and the American public that one of the goals of the Cold War -- democracy for Eastern Europe -- is within our grasp.

The program must demonstrate clearly and definitively to the American public US interests for remaining in Europe. These interests can be defined and prioritized as follows: 1) national security -- any direct threat to the US, its territories, and its citizens; 2) economic -- preservation of our way of life and continued improvement in our standard of living; and 3) values -- desire to extend our democratic ideals and form of government throughout the world.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, the direct threat to US security interests in Europe has diminished greatly, and the US has been able to decrease its military contingent in Europe significantly. US economic interests in Europe remain crucial, however. US investments in Europe in 1992 accounted for 49% of all US overseas investments. At the same time, over half of the European Union's overseas investments are made in the US. Put another way, US exports to Europe in 1992 created 4.2 million American jobs.³⁶ With respect to exporting US democratic values, most of the former Warsaw Pact countries have established some form of democracy and are striving to develop market economies. Because the transformation is incomplete, the US has a continued interest in remaining engaged in the region.

In sum, US security is less threatened in Europe than at any time since World War II. That does not mean the US can disengage from the region. Vital economic interests along with our desire to see stable democracies remain at risk. Outbreaks of ethnic and religious conflicts in

³⁶Daniel S. Hamilton, Beyond Bonn: America & the Berlin Republic, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994) 56.

Eastern Europe could create the potential for massive flows of refugees, increased anti-foreign backlash in Western Europe, and perhaps, even a spillover of fighting. The only way to counter this threat is for the US to stay actively engaged and to lead the effort to build stable democracies in Eastern Europe.

Effect on US Military Strategy

The debate over PFP and NATO expansion will have to include more than a discussion of US interests in Europe. It will also have to consider realistically the effect of PFP and NATO expansion on US military strategy. Under PFP, the US and NATO expect to undertake missions such as peacekeeping with the PFP partners. One can anticipate these types of missions will place US forces in conflicts that will be fought more and more along cultural dividing lines -- lines that will be difficult to discern -- and in places where allegiances are impossible to predict. US military strategy for Europe needs to be scrutinized to determine whether the US is capable of executing these missions under its current strategy. This section examines how PFP, potential NATO expansion, and the new missions they will impose on US forces will affect future US military strategy in Europe.

PFP will place additional requirements on US forces as they will be expected to exercise and train with partners in peacekeeping operations, search and rescue efforts, and humanitarian missions. These requirements will be in addition to the already strenuous taskings US forces in Europe are facing. The US European Command's operations tempo is at its highest level ever prompting its commander, General George A. Joulwan, to express the following caution. "... [W]e are stretching our people and resources to the limit. I am particularly concerned about the impact of unplanned and unbudgeted contingency operations on operating accounts, training, and the quality of life for our troops and their families."³⁷ Additionally, any unplanned contingencies will detract from planned training and could lead to an erosion of readiness.

³⁷George A. Joulwan, Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing, 3 Mar. 1994, (Transcript ID: 1050627).

The US has committed to keeping approximately 100,000 troops forward deployed in Europe. But, that number was determined before PFP was initiated and, thus, did not consider how PFP might affect US force structure in Europe. Depending on how many countries enroll in PFP and how NATO structures the PFP programs, the partners' desire for US participation could lead to a significant increase in commitments for US forces in Europe. Expansion of NATO would exacerbate this problem. New members will want US troops deployed on their soil as a demonstration of US commitment to the expansion. Given that the US forces in Europe are already stretched thin, it will not be possible to support these future requirements without changing the force structure, or at least altering where US forces are based.

A potential solution would be to move US troops stationed in Western Europe to the new Alliance members. With a decreased Soviet threat, West European countries will continue to seek a diminished US visibility while new NATO members in Eastern Europe will expect and solicit a more visible US presence.³⁸ One disadvantage of this solution would be the increased infrastructure costs needed to construct new facilities on the new members' territories.

Command and control of contingency operations involving NATO and PFP partners and its effect on US military strategy also needs to be addressed. To improve versatility and streamline command and control for potential operations outside the NATO area, the heads of state approved the development of the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) at the January 1994 Summit. Under this concept, forces for a particular operation could be tailored depending on the needs of the operation. Forces could come from NATO countries as well as PFP partner countries. The so-called "a la carte" option, CJTF introduces flexibility as nations could opt not to participate in certain operations for political reasons. NATO also envisions that CJTF could be used to provide forces for European-only operations under the Western European Union.³⁹

³⁸James Soligan, "US Forces in Europe. Essays On Strategy X, ed. Mary A. Sommerville (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1993) 181.

³⁹Stanley R. Sloan, "Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) and New Missions for NATO," Congressional Research Service Report, 17 Mar. 1994.

While CJTF could become a way for increased burden sharing between NATO Allies and the US, it also relies on unique US capabilities that the Allies do not possess. Specifically, airlift, command and control, and intelligence are three areas where the US will be expected to contribute. As currently envisioned, even if a European-only CJTF were formed, it would depend on US airlift and intelligence. Because of this, US force structure in Europe will have to shift from the general purpose forces that opposed the Warsaw Pact to those more capable of coalition missions outside the traditional NATO area. Additionally, because CJTF is a new concept, training and exercises will be necessary, thereby further straining already limited US resources in Europe.⁴⁰

Conclusion

PFP is part of NATO's continuing effort to adapt to the new security environment in Europe. This US initiative has evolved into a method for eventual NATO expansion to include the countries of Eastern Europe and perhaps even those of the former Soviet Union. While the concept for PFP and where it takes NATO is vague, it offers the advantage of developing a tailored program for each country that wishes to enroll as a partner. This flexibility gives NATO additional time to consider how it wants to proceed toward expansion, but does not totally shut out nations who want to join the Alliance. In other words, PFP solves the immediate problem of what to do about calls from East European states for entry into the Alliance, but it fails to address the long-term effects of potential NATO expansion.

PFP is definitely a step in the right direction for NATO. The key to its success and to NATO's continued progress toward embracing fully the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe is implementation. Formulating PFP programs for all the countries that desire a partnership and combined NATO and partner exercises will form a solid foundation for the future relationship between NATO and the partners. Currently, PFP is a framework plan only,

⁴⁰Sloan.

and more details are needed to build an effective program. Moreover, further definition of the process for accession to NATO is required. Definitive membership criteria and tentative timelines for joining NATO are necessary to demonstrate the Alliance's commitment to adjusting to the new security environment in Europe.

US leadership in NATO remains vital to the continued success of the Alliance. PFP serves as a catalyst for more clearly defining US interests in Europe. To demonstrate its commitment to PFP and future presence in the region, the US should establish a high-level coordinator for PFP, who would ensure PFP retains its high priority in NATO and guides the debate in the US regarding NATO's expansion and its implications for the US.

Finally, US military strategy must continue to adjust based on new and different roles and requirements derived from PFP and the potential NATO expansion. While the security threat is greatly diminished in Europe, US political and economic interests throughout the region remain at risk. A flexible adaptation to these vastly different threats will ensure that the US can continue to protect its interests and those of its Allies as a new world order evolves.